

AMTRAK POLICE AND SECURITY DEPARTMENT



EMERGENCY RESPONDER SAFETY ALERT

March 24, 2010

F.D. OPERATIONS ON OR IN CLOSE PROXIMITY TO RAIL- ROAD PROPERTY



In light of a recent incident in Detroit, Michigan, involving a ladder truck struck by an Amtrak Train, emergency response personnel are reminded to keep the following points in mind prior to, and when responding to incidents on, or in close proximity to railroad property:

- Know what railroad controls train movement on the tracks that run through your response area.
- Make sure that your communications center/dispatcher has the proper emergency telephone contact numbers for the railroads in your response area.
- If the railroad(s) in your response area is equipped with an AC or DC overhead catenary system, or DC 3rd rail system used for traction power, know what railroad controls those systems.
- Pre-plan with the railroads that run through your response area (as you would for a target hazard building).

Prior to allowing your personnel to operate on, or about the tracks, ask yourself, do they really need to be on or about the tracks (risks vs. benefits), or can the railroad personnel handle the incident? If your answer is yes, then:

- Do not operate on, or in close proximity to a track (15 feet) unless you have received confirmation from the railroad, through your dispatcher/communications center, that all train movement has been stopped on the affected tracks.
- For areas where trains are powered by an overhead wire (catenary system), do not operate within 15' of the overhead wire until you receive confirmation, from the railroad, through your dispatcher/communications center, that power has been removed and the overhead wire has been grounded.
- For areas where trains are powered by a 3rd rail system, do not operate on or about the tracks until you receive confirmation, from the railroad, through your dispatcher/communications center, that 3rd rail power has been removed.
- Establish a command post and notify the railroad of the location of the command post.

For information on Passenger Train Emergency Response Training in New York State, contact the following:

- **AMTRAK** - Office of Emergency Preparedness, 518-462-5743
- **Metro North Railroad** - Office of Fire Prevention, 914-271-1608
- **Long Island Rail Road - (Nassau & Suffolk Counties)** Office of the Fire Marshal, 347-494-6031

Freight Operations - **Operation Lifesaver**, NYSOPLIFESAVER@aol.com



The two pictures above are from the incident in Detroit, Michigan.



In a separate incident, in another state, this engine was operating at a car fire. The engine did not clear the crossing gates. Luckily, the freight train saw the rear lights on the engine, and was traveling slow enough so it could stop in time.